



Northwest Alloys, Inc.

March 29, 2000

Department of the Army
Walla Walla District, Corps of Engineers
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

RE: Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Report

Dear Army Corps of Engineers Reviewer:

Salmon are important in the Northwest because they are a part of who we are. They have been a part of Northwest culture since before written history. But salmon are not the only aspect of our Northwest culture. We value our independence, and the economies of small communities throughout the Northwest that depend on low-cost, clean electricity that are necessary for our way of life.

We need to understand why salmon runs are weak, and develop feasible ways to recover weak, threatened and endangered runs without sacrificing our other values. That is why this Report is important. Your report acknowledges that even with the best science available we cannot predict what will happen to a number of salmon runs no matter what actions we take. Maybe someday when we know more about weather, ocean conditions, habitat, hatcheries and the impacts of hydroelectric dams, we will be able to predict with certainty the impacts of our human decisions. But your report makes it abundantly clear that we can't do that today.

In the light of all this uncertainty about salmon, calls for breaching the four lower Snake River dams are premature. There is no guarantee that breaching these dams will produce a significant salmon benefit.

What I do know is that breaching these dams will hurt other parts of our society. If the dams are breached, we will lose clean power supplies that will have to be replaced by higher-cost, higher-polluting supplies. This will definitely affect my workplace, the Northwest Alloys magnesium smelter, located in Stevens County north of Spokane in Addy, WA. Since power costs are a major factor in the ability of my magnesium smelter to compete, it is simply not true that natural river drawdown will have little social and economic effect as the report states. This is

especially true in locations like Stevens County which depends heavily on Northwest Alloys for a large part of its economic base. Stevens County and adjacent Ferry and Pend Oreille counties have the highest unemployment and lowest per capita incomes in the state.

On behalf of the 350 people that are directly employed at Northwest Alloys, and the people in our community that are impacted by that employment, I urge you to reject lower Snake River dam breaching and drawdown alternatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "O. E. Wilkinson".

O. E. Wilkinson
Public affairs Manager